



# Department of Justice

United States Attorney Richard S. Hartunian  
Northern District of New York

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## **DEFENDANT PLEADS GUILTY TO FEDERAL OFFENSE OF SEX TRAFFICKING OF A CHILD**

### ***Defendant Faces Imprisonment term of 10 years to Life***

BINGHAMTON, NEW YORK - United States Attorney Richard S. Hartunian announced that Edward Tilden, 32 years of age and from Utica, New York, pleaded guilty today in federal court to an offense charging him with Sex Trafficking Of A Child.

In pleading guilty, Edward Tilden admitted that in and about February of 2012, in the Broome, Oneida, and Onondaga counties in the Northern District of New York and elsewhere, defendant Tilden and others, aiding and abetting each other, while in and affecting interstate commerce, did knowingly recruit, entice, harbor, transport, provide, obtain, and maintain by any means a person with the initials M.L., who had not attained the age of 18 years, knowing, or in reckless disregard of the fact that M.L. would be caused to engage in one or more commercial sex acts, and did benefit, financially and by receiving things of value, from participation in the venture which has engaged in the act described above, in violation of Title 18, United States Code, §§ 1591(a) & (b) and 2.

Tilden further admitted that he and others, while aiding and abetting each other, knowingly recruited, enticed, harbored, transported, provided, obtained, and maintained a minor with the initials M.L., who was 16 years of age at the time, in order to prostitute M.L. to adult men in exchange for money and controlled substances. Tilden and the others photographed and caused M.L. to be photographed in sexually seductive poses wearing only lingerie and posted said photographs of M.L. on Backpage.com, an internet classified advertising website, offering M.L. for sex in exchange for money. Additionally, Tilden and the others utilized cellular telephones to send mass cellular texts offering M.L. for sex to customers in exchange for money. Furthermore, Tilden and the others transported and caused M.L. to be transported to various locations including hotels where M.L. was instructed and caused to engage in commercial sex acts, in that, M.L. engaged in sexual acts including intercourse and oral sex with customers in exchange for money and controlled substances. Tilden and the others benefitted, both financially and by receiving things of value, by prostituting M.L. to customers, in that, Tilden and the others shared the money and controlled substances acquired from customers with whom M.L. was caused to engage in sex acts.

The federal charge stems from an investigation conducted by the FBI-Albany Division, New York State Police, Oneida County District Attorney's Office, Utica Police Department, and the Oneida County Child Advocacy Center. The investigation concerned a prostitution ring involved in selling a minor to engage in sexual conduct in exchange for money and drugs. The



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prostitution ring utilized the website Backpage.com to advertise the prostitution. The ring also utilized a texting network to advertise their prostitution business. The Oneida County District Attorney has charged several other defendants with state crimes in connection to this overall joint investigation.

Edward Tilden continues to be held in the custody of the U.S. Marshal's Service pending sentencing. Tilden is scheduled to be sentenced on September 19, 2014. At sentencing, he faces a statutory mandatory minimum term of 10 years prison and a maximum of life. The maximum possible fine is \$250,000.

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